Our Digital Village

National report
after the RMA workshops - Poland

‘RMA workshop cycle in rural areas of Podkarpacie, Poland’

December 2023

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Introduction

According to statistics from the Central Statistical Office, there are currently 43,122 rural villages in Poland. 29 138 belong to rural municipalities and 13 984 to urban-rural municipalities. The largest number of villages is located in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship (7,843) and the smallest in the Opolskie Voivodeship (1,017). Most people live in villages in the Podkarpackie voivodeship (58.44%) and the smallest in the Śląskie voivodeship (22.4%).

The rural population in Poland is getting older. More recently, the proportion of the population in old age exceeds that of children and young people. The Polish countryside has an average of 0.7 persons aged 0 to 14 years for every person aged 60 and over.

In addition, there is a clear dividing line between Polish rural areas, running more between the south-western and north-eastern parts of the country. However, this situation is changing, as can be seen, inter alia, in the data on non-agricultural activity. The percentage of non-agricultural entities is higher in the West than in the East, but where it is high, there is also a regression.

Looking back into history, before the First World War there existed side by side, on the lands once belonging to Poland, in different proportions, large landownership and peasant ownership with a specific agrarian structure. This depended on the degree of development of industrial production, the demand for industrial production, foodstuffs, possibilities of agricultural exportation, etc. Generally, in the conditions in the period before the First World War, the agricultural sector was the most important factor in national development. In the period before the First World War, the worst situation prevailed in Galicia, where the development of non-agricultural sectors of the economy was the weakest, in contrast to the Prussian partition, where non-agricultural sectors of the economy developed most strongly, creating better conditions for agriculture's development. According to many authors the Wielkopolska region reached during the interwar period a production level (yields, livestock productivity) similar to or higher than in Western Europe. This applied to both large landownership and peasant farming, whose agrarian structure remained a little fragmented. The agrarian structure remained a little fragmented. This was done on the basis that one owner remained on the farm, while the remaining family found another way of life.

After World War II, the land use picture changed; during the socialist Polish People's Republic as a result of the radical “Land reform” in 1944-1945, the manorial property was abolished, as a result of the acquisition of post-German lands. Finally, the political authorities began to promote production cooperatives with a simultaneous persecution of large-scale peasant (“kulak”) farms, especially in the years 1953-1955. As a consequence of these measures, four forms of ownership emerged: 1. individual farms, 2. state farms, 3. production cooperatives and 4. agricultural circles with their respective structures of land

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use. In 1980, the individual economy had by far the largest share in terms of agricultural land (74.5%), while State Agricultural Farms (PGR) only exceeded one-fifth (20.1%), production cooperatives (4.0%) and even less the local agricultural rings (1.4%), which were of marginal significance. However, it is worth adding that social farms were concentrated in the post-German northern and western, where the individual economy was less represented. This had negative effects in the 1990s, when these farms were rapidly dissolved, causing high unemployment in rural areas. This mainly concerns PGR.

Poland's accession to the European Union has brought about significant changes in the functioning of agriculture. On the one hand, it was covered by the instruments of the Common Agricultural. On the other hand, it began to be subject to competition from better-developed agriculture "Old 15" countries. It resulted in the necessity of further transformations in Polish agriculture. The changes that took place in the agricultural sector in Poland concern structural transformations, the level of productivity of production factors, and the level and structure of agricultural production and structure of agricultural production. Due to the differentiation of agriculture, the level of social and economic development of social and economic development and absorption of aid funds in the EU, the direction of these changes in particular countries remains different.

The trends in the production structure in other EU Member States are also reflected in production in Poland. These include the decrease in production of cereals, sugar beet and potatoes, as well as an increase in rapeseed production. In the production of pork livestock, Poland is in 4th place among EU countries (despite a 6% decrease in production). It should be expected that changes in the level and structure of agricultural production in Poland will continue to be similar to those in the EU. It results from the fact that agriculture of all member states is subordinated to the Common Agricultural Policy, as well as from globalisation processes which do not remain without influence on the shape of agricultural policy and the volume and structure of production.

Method

Regarding the first, activities were carried out in such a way for active participation and inclusion of all the involved. When it comes to participation learning that was applied, each participant had the right to be heard, the right to give feedback, and the right to propose improvements to the sessions. The study circle methodology implies that smaller groups of 7 to 15 persons discuss a topic, issue or problem. There is a facilitator or organiser of the study circle who is aware of the methodology, and who leads the discussions. Focusing on exploring a specific area, that the participants know about before. Involvement, interactions and dynamics of the activity tend to be higher in comparison to a typical group structure, reinforcing creativity and self-confidence to strengthen interpersonal relations. Also, the fact that the representatives do not know each other

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benefits the exchange of unique information, allows for familiarisation with new perspectives and enables community-based learning.

Through the settings of chairs in a circle and the participants facing each other, they can read from body language, the gestures and therefore easily understand what they are trying to communicate. Such a method also provides for higher engagement and openness to share opinions.

In the ODV project, the organisation of study circles has been with 10 participants each time. With participants meeting a few times they became more familiar with their attitudes and therefore each next time were more open for discussions. In total, there were 9 face-to-face workshops (specific data is presented in the next section).

In connection with the above, we have implied inquiry-based learning which allows the development of problem-solving skills, sparking curiosity around a topic or discussed issue. With it applied we are triggered to continue to explore or look for information, sometimes answering our questions. This method requires the engagement of both the facilitator of the session and the participants. The reason is that the facilitator is responsible for forming the scenarios, asking questions and collecting feedback from the participants, moderating the sessions, While the participants are encouraged to navigate around the scenarios by forming their questions, collecting data (by remembering it or writing it down), explaining own thoughts and opinions, and communicating in a group to come to solid arguments.

Used also the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) method, one developed by Danilo Dolci from the Socratic concept of Maieutic. Although it has its roots in Greece, it has been tested and applied in different countries, proving to be successful in conducting self-analysis workshops and brainstorming working sessions in groups. Creating a sense of responsibility in collective exploration, as defined by Dolci, considers each individual's opinion/experience/thoughts as the reference point for further discussions. This method is closely connected with the previously mentioned study circle methodology, also implying the need for the sharing process of answering, exploring and creating, rather than sticking to evaluated truths. They relate to one another and thus have been combined in our activities, favouring freely expressing one's reflections, sharing experiences and discovering new pathways for analysing, testing and creative co-education.

The methods used bring advantage to everyone involved, strengthening their digital capacity in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies to take action for enhancement opportunities.

Applying a combination of methods has also allowed for a wider dimension and increased involvement, taking into account the peculiarities of different participants which may favour (or be more comfortable) with one method over another. Taking into consideration the different learning styles impact the outcomes of the activity, it also boosts the

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interest and motivation to either a) continue using a specific result, or b) continue upskilling in the proposed area. The organisation of face-to-face sessions can also impact the participant in another way. Through networking they develop new relations that can be continued either to a) support each other in further learning), or b) establish contact for personal or professional reasons.

Participants

A total of 30 participants took part in the workshops, including school students, educational staff, adults of the community and policymakers. There were 19 female participants and 11 male participants

Table 1. Profile of the participants in Introductory Workshop – Students

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Student	F	Inneo	P1
Student	F	Inneo	P2
Student	F	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P3
Student	M	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P4
Student	M	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P5
Student	F	Pieczara Nowy Borek	P6
Student	F	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P7
Student	M	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania	P8
Student	F	ZSG	P9
Student	F	Odnowa	P10

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Table 2. Profile of the participants in the Introductory Workshop – Adults

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Adult of the community	M	The Center for Training and Research INNEO	P1
Educator	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P2
Educator	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P3
Adult of the community	M	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P4
Adult of the community	F	Association for the Support of Women 'Victoria'	P5
Adult of the community	F	Acumen Training	P6
Educator	F	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P7
Adult of the community	M	Moonbite S.A.,	P8
Educator	F	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P9
Educator	F	I LO Rzeszów	P10

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Table 3. Profile of the participants in Self-analysis workshop – Students

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Student	F	Inneo	P1
Student	F	Inneo	P2
Student	F	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P3
Student	M	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P4
Student	M	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P5
Student	F	Pieczara Nowy Borek	P6
Student	F	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P7
Student	M	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania	P8
Student	F	ZSG	P9
Student	F	Odnowa	P10

Table 4. Profile of participants in Self-analysis workshop – Adults

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Adult of the community	M	The Center for Training and Research INNEO	P1
Educator	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P2
Educator	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P3

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Adult of the community	M	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P4
Adult of the community	F	Association for the Support of Women 'Victoria'	P5
Adult of the community	F	Acumen Training	P6
Educator	F	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P7
Adult of the community	M	Moonbite S.A.,	P8
Educator	F	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski	P9
Educator	F	I LO Rzeszów	P10

Table 5. Profile of the participants in First Mixed Workshop

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Teacher/educator	M	The Center for Training and Research INNEO	P1
Teacher/educator	F	ZSG	P2
Student	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P3

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Teacher/educator	m	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P4
Policy maker	F	Association for the Support of Women 'Victoria'	P5
Teacher/educator	F	Acumen Training	P6
Teacher/educator	M	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania	P7
Student	F	Odnowa	P8
Student	F	Inneo	P9
Student	F	Inneo	P10

Table 6. Profile of the participants in Second Mixed Workshop

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Teacher/educator	M	The Center for Training and Research INNEO	P1
Teacher/educator	F	ZSG	P2
Student	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P3
Teacher/educator	m	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P4
Policy maker	F	Association for the Support of Women 'Victoria'	P5
Teacher/educator	F	Acumen Training	P6

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Teacher/educator	M	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania	P7
Student	F	Odnowa	P8
Student	F	Inneo	P9
Student	F	Inneo	P10

Table 7. Profile of the participants in Third Mixed Workshop

Type of participant	Gender	Organisation	Identification codes
Teacher/educator	M	The Center for Training and Research INNEO	P1
Teacher/educator	F	ZSG	P2
Student	F	Technical University of Rzeszow	P3
Teacher/educator	M	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	P4
Policy maker	F	Association for the Support of Women 'Victoria'	P5
Teacher/educator	F	Acumen Training	P6
Teacher/educator	M	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania	P7
Student	F	Odnowa	P8
Student	F	Inneo	P9
Student	F	Inneo	P10

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Information tools

The RMA workshops conducted with educational staff, adult learners, and youth constitute the main source of information used in this article.

Data analysis

The data analysis is presented in the tables below. A categorical system for the introductory meetings and the self-analysis workshops on needs and desires with each target group individually was established.

Table 8 . Categories and Codes

Category	Subcategory
1. Advantages and challenges of the rural community	1.1 Advantages 1.2 Challenges
2. Definition of digital skills	2.1 Ability 2.2 Use 2.3 Create Share
3. Caring about digital skills	3.1 High importance 3.2 Medium importance 3.3 Low importance
4. Reliance on digital skills	4.1 Reliance for educational purposes 4.2 Reliance for social purposes 4.3 Reliance for work purposes

Table 9. Categories for Self–Analysis Workshops

Category	Subcategory
1. Confidence in own level of digital skills	1.1 Low level 1.2 Medium level 1.3 High level
2. Typology of digital tools	2.1 Social networks 2.2 Creative tools 2.3 Gaming tools 2.4 Media tools

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3. Acquisition	3.1 Self-taught 3.2 School or High School 3.3 Private academy 3.4 Friends or relatives
4. Importance and improvement	4.1 Social aspects 4.2 Security aspects 4.3 Management aspects 4.4 Technical aspects
5. Emergent technologies knowledge and contribution	5.1 High knowledge 5.2 Medium knowledge 5.3 Low knowledge 5.4 Contribution

Results

INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS

1. In your opinion, what are the advantages and challenges of your (rural) community?

The participants identified the following advantages of their rural communities: The serene landscapes, characterised by rolling hills, expansive farmlands, and dense forests, provide a picturesque backdrop for a slower pace of living. In these close-knit communities, there exists a strong sense of neighbourly camaraderie and a shared connection to the rich cultural heritage of Poland. The slower rhythm of life allows for a deeper connection to nature, fostering an appreciation for sustainable practices and traditional agricultural methods. Moreover, the tranquillity of rural settings often translates into a lower-stress environment, promoting mental well-being. Additionally, these communities often boast a vibrant local economy centred around agriculture, crafts, and small businesses, contributing to a sense of self-sufficiency and resilience. The preservation of traditional customs and festivities further adds to the cultural richness of rural life in Poland, making it an appealing and fulfilling choice for those seeking a more rooted and authentic lifestyle.

An adult learner described the advantages in the following way:

"Connection to the land, rooted in centuries-old traditions and a profound sense of community. It involves a harmonious interplay between the local environment and the daily lives of residents, with a strong emphasis on preserving cultural heritage." (P3A)

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"In these communities, authenticity is reflected in the continuation of time-honoured practices such as traditional farming methods, artisanal craftsmanship, and folk celebrations that have been passed down through generations. The authentic rural lifestyle also encompasses a close-knit social fabric, where interpersonal relationships are deeply valued, and a collective spirit of mutual support prevails. It involves an intimate relationship with nature, where residents often engage in activities such as farming, foraging, and participating in seasonal rituals that reflect a profound respect for the changing seasons." (P7A)

Overall, an authentic rural lifestyle in Poland is characterised by a genuine connection to the past, a strong sense of identity, and a commitment to preserving the cultural tapestry that defines these communities.

On the other hand, rural communities in Poland face a myriad of challenges that impact their sustainability and development. One significant hurdle is the demographic shift, with a steady outmigration of young people to urban areas in search of better economic opportunities and education, leading to an ageing population in rural regions. This demographic imbalance poses challenges to maintaining essential services, such as healthcare and education. Economic disparities persist, as rural areas often grapple with limited job opportunities and lower income levels compared to urban centres. Infrastructure development, including transportation and broadband access, remains a pressing issue, hindering connectivity and economic diversification. Climate change also poses threats, impacting traditional agricultural practices and increasing the vulnerability of rural livelihoods. Furthermore, there is an ongoing need for comprehensive policies that address these multifaceted challenges and promote sustainable development, ensuring that rural communities in Poland can thrive in the face of evolving social, economic, and environmental pressures.

"One of the prominent issues is the geographical dispersion of these communities, leading to a scarcity of schools and educational resources. This spatial challenge results in longer commutes for students and, in some cases, limits the range of available educational options. The outmigration of young people to urban areas also contributes to the decline in student populations, impacting the sustainability of rural schools." (P2S)

"Additionally, there may be a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in specialised subjects, further affecting the overall quality of education. Limited access to advanced technology and digital resources can create a digital divide, hindering students from rural areas in acquiring essential digital literacy skills." (P4E)

Overcoming these challenges requires targeted efforts to invest in rural education infrastructure, address teacher shortages, and implement innovative solutions to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students, regardless of their geographical location.

Limited access to advanced technology and digital resources can create a digital divide, hindering students from rural areas from acquiring essential digital literacy skills. Moreover, the shortage of funding exacerbates these challenges, constraining the

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ability to invest in educational infrastructure and resources. Difficulty in attracting qualified educators compounds these issues, jeopardising the delivery of quality education in rural schools.

2. How do you define DIGITAL SKILLS?

The definition of digital skills among participants reflects a robust practical understanding and a heightened awareness of the positive and negative effects of information and communication technology (ICT). These individuals exhibit proficiency in utilising digital skills, with a particular focus on the versatile application of ICT for leisure activities and personal growth. Additionally, the participants prioritise the effective use of ICT tools. Specifically, when considering content creation, there is a shared awareness among the participants of the need to actively contribute to digital spaces rather than passively consume information. This nuanced understanding of digital skills within the educational landscape of rural Poland underscores the importance of adapting to and leveraging technology for both personal and communal development.

"Digital skills in the context of online safety encompass the ability to navigate social media platforms securely, recognizing and avoiding phishing attempts, and setting up robust privacy settings on various online accounts." (P10A)

This involves understanding the importance of strong, unique passwords and employing two-factor authentication to enhance account security. Recognizing and critically evaluating online information sources to avoid misinformation or scams is another crucial aspect of digital skills in the context of online safety.

In terms of personal pleasure, digital skills can manifest in the adept use of streaming services for entertainment, proficient participation in online gaming communities, or the creative utilisation of social media platforms for self-expression. For example, individuals may showcase their talents through platforms like YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram, engaging with digital content both as consumers and contributors.

"Effective management of digital leisure time, such as knowing when and how to disconnect to maintain a healthy balance, represents a nuanced aspect of digital skills in the pursuit of personal enjoyment." (P5A)

3. How much do you care about digital skills in your community?

Digital skills are the universal language that fosters meaningful connections. They go beyond being a school subject, serving as a vital survival tool in our changing world. These skills are our key to countless opportunities, enabling us to communicate effectively, express ourselves creatively, and bridge gaps in our diverse community. As active participants in the digital age, we recognize that digital skills are not only a

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requirement for success but also a necessity for understanding, connecting, and building relationships in our interconnected world.

"Digital skills are like a universal language in our community. They empower us to connect, learn, and create in a world that's increasingly online. It's not just about technology; it's about being an active participant in the digital age." (P7S)

"In our community, digital skills are more than just a school subject; they're a survival tool. They help us adapt to the changing world, ensuring we're not left behind in the fast-paced digital landscape." (P9A)

"Having strong digital skills is like having a key to countless opportunities. From online safety to expressing ourselves creatively, it's an essential aspect of being a responsible and engaged member of our and any community." (P1S)

"Our community is diverse, and digital skills help bridge the gaps. They enable us to share our stories, learn from others, and create a collective narrative that transcends geographical boundaries." (P4A)

"In a world dominated by technology, digital skills are not just a requirement for success; they're a necessity for understanding the world around us. They empower us to be informed citizens and active contributors to our community." (P8S)

4. How do you and your community rely on the use of digital services? If so, for what purposes?

Digital organisation tools, ranging from calendars and task management apps to cloud-based storage systems, provide individuals with efficient means to structure their lives and enhance productivity. These digital tools enable users to schedule and prioritise tasks, set reminders, and access information seamlessly across devices. The ability to maintain a well-organised digital environment translates into better time management, reduced stress, and improved overall efficiency. Moreover, digital organisation facilitates collaboration and communication, allowing individuals to share and coordinate tasks seamlessly, whether in academic, professional, or personal settings. In essence, the importance of staying organised with digital skills lies in optimising workflows, minimising disruptions, and ultimately fostering a more structured and balanced lifestyle in the digital age.

"Digital services are like my academic lifeline. From online research to collaborative projects, they're integral to how I learn and work with my peers. I can access information instantly and connect with classmates seamlessly, making my educational experience more dynamic." (P3S)

"In our fast-paced world, digital services are not just conveniences; they're necessities. From managing assignments on cloud platforms to staying organised with digital calendars, these tools keep me on top of my school responsibilities and help me balance my schedule." (P2S)

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Social media platforms contribute to relationship maintenance by providing a virtual space for staying updated on each other's lives, sharing moments, and engaging in ongoing conversations. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter facilitate the exchange of thoughts, photos, and updates, creating a continuous thread of connection. They serve as a digital hub where individuals can celebrate milestones, offer support, and participate in each other's daily lives, fostering a sense of community even when physically apart. Both video calls and social media platforms contribute significantly to the maintenance of relationships, offering avenues for meaningful communication and connection in our increasingly globalised and digitalized world.

"Socially, digital services are how I stay connected with friends and family, especially when distances separate us. Whether it's video calls or social media, these platforms play a crucial role in maintaining relationships and fostering a sense of community." (P5A)

"Being part of clubs and extracurricular activities is so much more accessible with digital services. From organising events to sharing updates, these tools make it easier for us to collaborate and stay engaged in our shared interests." (P8S)

"In the professional realm, digital services are my preparation for the future. Learning to navigate digital tools now is not just about convenience; it's about building the skills I'll need in the workforce and staying competitive in a tech-driven world." (P3A)

SELF-ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS

1. Are you confident with your level of digital skills?

The participants' digital skills are at different levels and everyone gave different examples and described themselves differently in the context of their level.

This variability underscores the nuanced nature of digital literacy, reflecting the different experiences, exposures, and comfort levels participants have with various digital tools and technologies. Some may highlight expertise in specific applications, showcasing a more advanced understanding, while others might emphasise foundational skills or a willingness to learn. This diversity suggests that digital skills are multi-faceted and context-dependent, shaped by individual preferences, needs, and exposure to technology. Acknowledging these differences fosters a more inclusive understanding of digital skills, recognizing that everyone brings a valuable and distinct set of abilities to the digital landscape.

Having been immersed in technological advancements from an early age, individuals often develop a natural familiarity and comfort with various digital tools and platforms. This confidence stems from the continuous exposure to technology, enabling them to adapt quickly to new devices, software, and online environments. It fosters a proactive and fearless approach to problem-solving within the digital realm. The inherent understanding of technology's role in daily life contributes to a sense of self-assuredness in leveraging digital skills for communication, information retrieval, and creative

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expression. Ultimately, growing up with technology not only shapes one's skill set but also cultivates a confidence that is crucial in today's tech-driven world.

For adult learners, a notable association between high confidence and extensive hands-on experience was observed. The more these individuals engage in practical, real-world applications of their learning, the greater their confidence in their abilities. Educational staff similarly reported that the interconnected synergies between personal learning endeavours and their professional work significantly elevated their confidence levels. The integration of acquired knowledge into their daily tasks fostered a sense of competence and proficiency. Additionally, formal certifications emerged as a valuable support mechanism, providing a tangible validation of their skills and contributing further to their confidence. This suggests that, for both adult learners and educational staff, a combination of practical experience, the alignment of learning with work, and formal recognition through certifications played pivotal roles in enhancing and reinforcing their confidence in digital skills.

The constant evolution of technology in educational settings can create challenges, leaving educators grappling with the need to continually adapt their teaching methods and integrate new tools into their curriculum. The pressure to keep pace with these changes may contribute to a sense of overwhelm, as educators strive to balance their traditional teaching roles with the demands of incorporating cutting-edge technologies.

Feelings of ineffectiveness may arise from a perceived gap between the rapid advancements in technology and the time and resources available for professional development. The struggle to stay current with the latest educational technologies can lead to a sense of falling behind, impacting educators' confidence in their ability to effectively leverage these tools in the classroom. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing support, professional development opportunities, and a recognition of the need for a manageable pace of adaptation to ensure that educational staff can navigate technological advancements with confidence and efficacy.

2. What are the digital tools that you use or are aware of/familiar with?

The participants across all three groups—adults, students, and educational staff—demonstrated a commonality in the types of digital tools they use, are aware of, or are familiar with. Notably, social networks and creative tools emerged as prevalent categories across all participant categories. Social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, play a central role in their digital landscape, facilitating communication, connection, and information-sharing.

“Social networks are like our virtual hangout spots, where we connect, share, and stay updated on each other's lives. It's where our social circles thrive in the digital space." (P9S)

"Creative tools make expressing ourselves online so much fun. Whether it's editing videos or designing graphics, these tools let us showcase our creativity in a way that

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feels natural to us." (P10S)

Similarly, creative tools garnered attention, indicating a shared interest in platforms that enable self-expression and content creation. These tools may encompass a range of applications, including graphic design software, video editing tools, and platforms for artistic expression. The widespread acknowledgment of social networks and creative tools reflects the integral role these categories play in shaping the digital experiences of participants, regardless of their age or role within the educational context. This shared familiarity suggests the importance of these tools in contemporary digital culture and highlights their relevance across diverse user groups.

"Navigating social networks is crucial not just for personal connections but also for understanding how students interact online. It's a window into their digital world." (P7A)

"Creative tools have transformed the way we approach teaching materials. From designing engaging presentations to incorporating multimedia, these tools help make learning more dynamic and appealing to students." (P1A)

3. How did you acquire your digital skills?

Combination of formal education, self-directed learning, and practical experiences.

Access to digital technology and the internet may vary in rural areas, but schools play a crucial role in providing foundational digital literacy education. This formal education includes learning basic computer skills, internet navigation, and the use of productivity software. Self-directed learning is also significant, as students often explore digital tools and platforms on their own. This may involve online tutorials, educational apps, and engaging with digital content that aligns with their interests. Libraries, community centres, and online resources can contribute to self-directed learning opportunities. Practical experiences, such as participating in community projects, internships, or extracurricular activities, can further enhance digital skills. Hands-on application allows students to contextualise their knowledge and develop problem-solving abilities in real-world scenarios.

“Challenges in rural areas, such as limited internet access or outdated technology, may impact the learning process. Efforts to bridge the digital divide, provide equitable access to resources, and integrate technology into the curriculum can contribute to a more comprehensive development of digital skills among students in rural communities.” (P10A)

4. Which aspects of digital skills are more important in your teaching and which ones would you like to improve?

For Students at School:

Information Literacy:

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Research Skills: Developing adeptness in utilising academic databases and discerning scholarly sources. *"Navigating databases like JSTOR has been crucial; it's like unlocking a treasure trove of reliable information for our research." (P1S)*

Source Evaluation like mastering the CRAAP test (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) for critical evaluation of online sources. *"We've learned to question everything online – checking the source is like our digital survival skill." (P4S)*

Online Communication - acquiring professional communication skills through email etiquette and platforms like Slack. *"Learning to communicate effectively online is not just about words; it's about building a virtual presence that speaks volumes."(P2S)*

Utilising collaborative platforms for group projects, enhancing teamwork and digital collaboration.

"Google Workspace has been our virtual classroom – it's where our ideas converge, and projects come to life." (P3S)

For Educational Staff in Teaching:

"The SMART Board is not just a tool; it's our canvas for creating interactive learning experiences that captivate students." (P10A)

Digital platforms like Kahoot! for interactive and real-time assessment. "*Assessment is not just about tests; it's about gamifying learning through platforms like Kahoot! to make it fun and insightful." (P6A)*

Professional Development likes actively participating in conferences like ISTE for continuous learning and adaptation.

"In education, if you're not evolving, you're standing still. ISTE is our compass for navigating the ever-changing landscape of edtech."

For Adults in Daily Life:

Digital Security. Password Management - employing secure password management tools for enhanced online security.

Password management is of utmost importance for adults as they navigate the intricate terrain of the digital world. Adults, often juggling numerous online accounts encompassing personal, financial, and professional aspects, rely on effective password practices as a primary line of defence. These practices are vital in protecting personal and financial assets, and preventing unauthorised access to sensitive information such as healthcare records and legal documents. In the professional realm, robust password management becomes crucial for securing corporate systems, and databases, and maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive corporate information. Beyond safeguarding against identity theft and mitigating cybersecurity threats like phishing and hacking attempts, proper password management ensures compliance with data protection regulations. By preserving privacy, offering convenience through secure credential

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storage, and instilling peace of mind, password management empowers adults to navigate the digital landscape with confidence, knowing their digital identities and valuable information are secure.

Task Organization: Leveraging productivity apps for streamlined task management.

"Todoist is not just a to-do list; it's my personal assistant in the digital realm, keeping my tasks in perfect order." (P7A)

5. Do you know something about Coding, Robotics, Microcontrollers and web-development, 3D modelling and printing? How do you think they could contribute to your daily and working life?

The participants' knowledge concerning Coding, Robotics, Microcontrollers and web-development, 3D modelling and printing was mostly medium and low knowledge.

In the exciting world of technology, students can explore various concepts like coding, robotics, microcontrollers, web development, and 3D modelling and printing. Coding is akin to speaking the language of robots, giving them fun instructions to follow. Robotics introduces the idea of creating helpful robot friends that can perform tasks or even dance. Microcontrollers act as the brains behind robots, ensuring they operate smoothly according to our plans. Web development transforms students into internet superheroes, allowing them to build engaging websites for everyone. Lastly, 3D modelling lets imaginations run wild by creating virtual toys on a computer, and 3D printing magically brings those creations to life, turning dreams into tangible realities.

However, this is general knowledge demonstrated by some of the participants, they were not practitioners in this field.

MIXED WORKSHOPS

1. Among the needs that were presented, and among the digital skill areas offered in the project, which do you think are the most important for you and in your community?

One word feedback

Answer	Number of same answers
Useful	5
Interesting	9
Exciting	2
Intensive	2
Innovation	3
Repeatability	1

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Challenge	2
Future	2

The overall assessment was very positive

1. **Since we're all here together, it is better to share some ideas to be introduced and that could be ideal to propose together with our planned initiatives. Do you have some ideas to propose?**

In response to the growing importance of digital skills in today's world, an innovative educational initiative could be the establishment of a Digital Skills Hub. This hub would serve as a comprehensive learning centre designed to empower individuals of all ages with essential digital competencies. The program would offer a diverse curriculum covering coding, web development, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and other crucial digital skills. Utilising a hands-on, project-based learning approach, the Digital Skills Hub would engage participants in real-world scenarios, fostering a deep understanding of digital concepts. To ensure inclusivity, the initiative could partner with schools, community centres, and online platforms, providing accessible resources and mentorship. By combining traditional and online learning methods, the Digital Skills Hub would create a dynamic and collaborative environment, equipping learners with the proficiency needed for success in the digital era. Potential areas for improving knowledge:

- increase the awareness of digital competences in trainees demonstrating different competence levels, from beginners to advanced digital solution practitioners;
- upskill on transversal digital competences to be practised in work context, but also in other daily environments;
- develop competences for driving educational staff towards the introduction of initiatives encompassing digital aspects to outperform SMEs providing more attractive service, support or solutions for their audience;
- increase information and digital competences in trainees;
- increase communication and collaboration skills of participants;
- equip with the responsibility and autonomy to create digital content;
- equip trainees with problem-solving competences;
- increase the knowledge and skills regarding safety in digital environments;
- provide the know-how on cloud computing fundamentals for practice;
- increase the knowledge and awareness on IoT and AI for entrepreneurship

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Discussion and conclusions

The provided passage offers insights into the demographic and historical aspects of rural life in Poland, highlighting the current distribution of villages across various voivodeships. Notably, the data underscores the ageing population in rural areas, with a higher proportion of elderly individuals compared to children and young people. The historical context outlines the agrarian structure before and after the First World War, emphasising significant changes post-World War II, including the abolition of manorial property and the establishment of different forms of ownership, such as individual farms and state farms. The text also touches upon the impact of Poland's accession to the European Union, leading to structural transformations in agriculture and the necessity of adapting to competition from more developed EU countries. Additionally, trends in production structure, influenced by the Common Agricultural Policy and globalisation, are highlighted, indicating potential future shifts in the agricultural landscape of Poland in alignment with broader EU patterns.

The recent COVID-19 outbreak severely hit the majority of businesses across Europe and the entire world. Many people lost their jobs and, unfortunately, many organisations were forced to close or significantly reduce their operations. For those who tried to stay on the market it was sometimes difficult if not impossible to adopt various ICT solutions to mitigate the influence of the pandemic on their organisations. This is the reason why the DigComp competences surfaced as one of the most important sets of skills that could be used to bring the businesses to the new way of conducting their day-to-day operations and how they handle the changed market environment on both local and international dimensions.

The definition of digital skills among participants reflects a robust practical understanding and a heightened awareness of the positive and negative effects of information and communication technology (ICT). These individuals exhibit proficiency in utilising digital skills, with a particular focus on the versatile application of ICT for leisure activities and personal growth. Additionally, the participants prioritise the effective use of ICT tools. Specifically, when considering content creation, there is a shared awareness among the participants of the need to actively contribute to digital spaces rather than passively consume information. This nuanced understanding of digital skills within the educational landscape of rural Poland underscores the importance of adapting to and leveraging technology for both personal and communal development.

Access to digital technology and the internet may vary in rural areas, but schools play a crucial role in providing foundational digital literacy education. This formal education includes learning basic computer skills, internet navigation, and the use of productivity software. Self-directed learning is also significant, as students often explore digital tools and platforms on their own. This may involve online tutorials, educational apps, and engaging with digital

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content that aligns with their interests. Libraries, community centres, and online resources can contribute to self-directed learning opportunities. Practical experiences, such as participating in community projects, internships, or extracurricular activities, can further enhance digital skills. Hands-on application allows students to contextualise their knowledge and develop problem-solving abilities in real-world scenarios.

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